HOLBROOK LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM

No. 102 October 8th, 1941

DEAR MEMBER,

One of our members describes in a recent letter her experience in the country district in which she settled not very long ago. She has in her house two children evacuated from London. They have had an unfortunate home history, and for this or other reasons are, so far as she can see, " completely devoid of any sense of social responsibility." It never occurs to them to lend a helping hand in the house or garden. They take from life without any thought of giving, and are wholly without initiative in their own lives. Things are not very different among the village youth. A youth club has been started and the young people are ready to get any fun they can out of it, but few are willing to shoulder any responsibility even for seeing the fun through, e.g. their own tennis tournament. It is only the tiniest handful who will stick at anything like a service group. " I feel myself," my friend writes, " coming to set a very high value on a ' proper pride,' when I come across these feckless young people, who won't bring any voluntary job to its completion, and who seem so devoid of pride in achievement."

DEMOCRACY AND DISCIPLINE

The story has no particular importance in itself. Its significance lies in the fact that the state of things it describes is widespread. Of course it is only one side of the picture. One never ceases to be astonished by the resourcefulness and adaptability shown by our people since the war began. Men and women seem to be available to deal with every kind of emergency and to perform every kind of service. But over against all this one has to set the evidence of an alarming absence in wide circles of a sense of responsibility and social obligation. No observant person can be satisfied that our present education in home and school is producing the results that a democracy must have if it is to survive. Something plainly needs to be done, and done quickly. " If the democratic way of life is to be preserved, it is essential to discover and apply the concept of discipline which is appropriate to its own life."

The sentence quoted is from a handbook that has just been published describing the County Badge training plan.[1] I have never been able to direct those of you who are interested in this effort to any satisfactory printed source of information. This lack has now been supplied. The reasons for the adoption of the name " County Badge " will be found convincing by most readers ; and the considerable number who have been prejudiced against the plan by dislike of a badge will discover that the badge is not the essential thing, and that the real meaning of the movement is better expressed by the subordinate title " The Fourfold Achievement." The training plan which has been worked out over a period of years in the light of educational experiments in different countries and of the experience of world-wide youth movements such as the Boy Scouts, is designed to develop just those qualities which our present education is failing to produce in sufficient degree. The standards demanded can be reached only by a self-imposed discipline. The aim of the training plan is to find and make effective in the critical years

[1] *The County Badge, or the Fourfold Achievement.* Oxford University Press. 6d.

of adolescence the incentives which are most potent in the formation of character, and by this means to vitalise and enrich what schools are now doing and at the same time to provide for the three-quarters of the boys and girls of the nation, who at present receive no systematic training after the age of fourteen, opportunities of developing in themselves qualities which their education has insufficiently emphasised and their working life done nothing to foster. It is at this point that the programme has a direct connection with the question which has come to occupy a central place in the News-Letter—the question of the kind of society that can offer a real alternative to any form of totalitarianism.

Many readers of the News-Letter have been concerned, very rightly, with the relation between the County Badge training plan and religion. The point to be grasped is that there is no intention of launching a new, independent youth movement. Thus the question of the place of religion in such a movement does not directly arise. The object is to secure the adoption by schools and existing youth organisations of certain standards of achievement which are necessary for all-round development. These achievements belong to the natural or human sphere ; they have to do with the full development of the human nature which we share with men of all races and nations, Christian and non-Christian alike. But what is proposed concerns us as Christians for two reasons. The first is that whatever promises to redeem human life from wastage and futility demands our whole-hearted co-operation ; the second that all education, even when it is aiming at producing qualities that are not specifically religious, is dealing with persons who are living wholes—so that the *context*, in which particular things are done, is all-important. Whether the self-discipline and self-mastery, the initiative and enterprise, which the County Badge training develops, are to be directed to the service of the highest ends or to unworthy and inhuman purposes depends on the fundamental beliefs and values of those responsible for the training. The training itself takes place at the level of man's natural life, but it will make a vital difference whether it takes place in a Christian or a non-Christian setting.

THE SUPPLEMENT

Dr. James Parkes has been concerned with the study of the Jewish question since 1930 and during the last seven years has given his whole time to this task. He is engaged in producing a large work on the subject of which two volumes, *The Conflict of Church and Synagogue* and *The Jew in the Medieval Community*, have already appeared.[1] Among his shorter and more popular works are *The Jew and His Neighbour*[2] and *The Jewish Problem in the Modern World*.[3] No one can possibly deal in a short Supplement with all the bearings of so vast a subject, nor is it possible in a question, on which many hold strong and divergent views, to write anything that will satisfy everyone. But I know no one who has a more comprehensive knowledge of the question in all its aspects or who brings to its consideration a more disinterested and balanced judgment.

Yours sincerely,

J. H. Oldham

[1] Soncino Press, 5 Gower Street, London. 10s. 6d. each. [2] S.C.M. Press. 3s. 6d. [3] Home University Library. 2s. 6d.

Subscriptions—The rate of subscription to the News-Letter is 12s. 6d. ($3.0 in U.S.A. and Canada) for one year, and 6s. 6d. ($1.50 in U.S.A. and Canada) for six months. Back numbers—4d. each, 1s. 2d. for 6, 1s. 11d. for 12 copies. Post free.

Groups—Special terms for Groups subscriptions can be had on application.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—
THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, ARLOSH HALL, MANSFIELD ROAD, OXFORD.

Published by Dr. J. H. Oldham for the Council on the Christian Faith and the Common Life and printed by the Kemp Hall Press Ltd., in the City of Oxford.

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER

OCTOBER 8TH 1941

Supplement to

C.N-L. No. 102

HOLBROOK LIBRARY PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

THE JEWISH QUESTION TO-DAY

By The Rev. JAMES PARKES, D.Phil.

When we look at the Jewish question in these days it is important to realise that if we are to give it any serious consideration we must treat it from three quite different standpoints. In the first place there is *antisemitism*, which has practically nothing to do with the Jews at all. In the second place there is the *Jewish Question*, the problem of actual relations with the Jewish community. And in the third place there is the problem of *the place of the Jews in the post-war world*, a problem which will certainly be insoluble unless we can make up our minds to discover the real facts about the Jews, as they are to-day, and to seek a solution solidly based on those facts.

ANTISEMITISM

It is increasingly urgent to realise that the brand of Jew-hatred assiduously spread by Germany has gained quite a foot-hold in this as well as in other countries, but that *it has absolutely no foundation of fact whatever in any action of any Jew or group of Jews now or in the past.*

"The Jews" do not, and never have, controlled the finance, the press or the government of this country, Nor has any other country ever been controlled by "world Jewry." There have been periods when individual Jews have been prominent, as were the Rothschilds a hundred years ago, or the various Jewish Communists in the period immediately following the last war, but there is no foundation in fact for linking these happenings to any planned Jewish plot, and there is no evidence either of individually powerful or prominent Jews being leaders of "world Jewry" or of their possessing other powers or interests than those of similarly powerful or prominent Gentiles. The whole gamut of bogeys created by Nazi antisemitism is imaginary, and has no relation to the real Jewish question. This cannot be stated too often or too categorically. No statement of this form of Jew-hatred has ever sustained examination by a court—and various Jewish communities have brought it to trial in recent years—and it has never been confirmed by the most painstaking historical, political or religious research. It is the demonology of the Nazi religion, and the way to attack it is to attack the Nazi religion as such. It has been plausibly argued that it is in essence the hatred of the believers in physical force, in the doctrine that might is right, directed against the contrary doctrine enshrined first in Judaism then in Christianity ; and that it is the Church which is the real enemy. Where the believers in force fear to attack the Church directly, they do so indirectly through the Jew. This is probably the true explanation in the realm of the subconscious and the metaphysical. But there is a more prosaic argument. We know now —many tried to tell us years ago—that there *is* a Nazi world-plot. The invention of an imaginary Jewish world-plot was both a camouflage and a justification for the real Nazi plot.

It is useless to bring before those who have surrendered themselves to this demonological possession actual evidence that the facts are not what they imagine. All that one can hope to do is to prevent the disease from spreading. There is the continuous "fifth column" work within our front arising from the fact that there *is* a quite real Jewish problem which provides a seed bed in which the fantasies of antisemitism can easily find root. It is only a step from real complaints about *Jews* to hysterical fear and hatred of *the Jews*. The *Jewish problem*, then, needs to be attacked frontally and openly, as it arises out of various ascertainable facts and natural feelings. It covers such things as the proportion of Jews in the Black Market scandal ; the selfish behaviour and lack of public spirit sometimes shown by Jews in relation to evacuation and food shortages ; various other forms of immoral or unpatriotic behaviour in the economic field both of British-born and of refugee Jews ;

and matters of a similar kind which provoke social indignation and suspicion.

THE JEWISH PROBLEM (A)

The issue is not to defend the Jews or to excuse the Jews, but to try to discover the Jews as they really are. Apologetics are apt to exaggerate, and the concentration of defence on points which need defending (for Jews are involved in these faults) is apt psychologically to attract attention only to faults.

A good starting point is to realise that we are dealing with a people with perfectly normal human reactions to their historic and contemporary experience. There is nothing mysterious about them—a lesson Shakespeare taught us centuries ago. They have ordinary human virtues and vices, and it is no more reasonable only to look at their vices than it would be only to consider the vices of Americans before admitting them as allies. Even those dreadful Bolsheviks of our childhood have suddenly been discovered to be Russians defending their soil and their form of society.

Secondly they show the characteristics common to every minority. In other words, their position as a minority has a certain over-riding effect on themselves, and on our reactions to them. On our side we do primarily notice those things which distinguish them from others, and we naturally emphasise their distinction from ourselves when individuals among them behave in a way we condemn ; on their side they have a stronger mutual loyalty, and a tendency either to exaggerate or to minimise those same distinctions. We need to keep these normal facts very clearly in mind in facing the situation—which undoubtedly exists—that people are increasingly " Jew-conscious" and that feeling against " the Jews " is increasing both in our own country and in America.

Even apart from the fact that an adequate knowledge of Jewish history and the Jewish religion makes one wonder not that there is so much real " Jewish Question," but that there is so little, ordinary people, who know nothing about the past, and take all the evidence they actually encounter at its face value, are in danger of becoming foolishly hysterical about the menace of the Jews. This is largely because they only consider one side of the evidence. They notice that Solomon Levi has been convicted of an offence against the food regulations ; they do not notice that Solomon Cohen has received the George Medal for conspicuous gallantry in an air raid. This is no question of malice but it is the lot of all minorities that their faults are more prominent than their virtues, and Jewish faults being concentrated into a relatively small field gain an exceptional prominence.

On the other hand it is bad apologetics to pretend that it is untrue or unimportant that numerous Solomon Levis commit food offences so long as numerous Solomon Cohens win the George Medal ; and it is perfectly reasonable for anyone dealing with food offences to scrutinise with extra care any Jewish name upon his list, or for the general public to feel a certain disgust with " the Jews," because so many Solomon Levis appear to exist. The trouble comes when people will exaggerate the significance of facts which in themselves are true, and take it as evidence either that this repellant behaviour of a number of Jews is common to all and turns " the Jews " into a national menace, or when they are led to believe that " the Jews " are also handling plots on a far vaster scale. Their disgust makes them potential dangers by opening the door to Nazi antisemitic propaganda.

What is true of food offences is true of evacuation problems, and of that group of experiences in which the individual Gentile finds reason to dislike his Jewish neighbour. The experiences are very often truly described, the reaction to them is natural. But they just aren't national problems, and they constitute a " menace " to nobody. They are extremely irritating; they explain by their repetition the popular attribution of similar behaviour to " the Jews," but there the matter stops. And so long as it stops there, people will probably be ready to recognise that the term " the Jews " is a social convenience rather than a statement of fact, and that they are not for a moment seriously stating that all Jews commit the offences in question. People who remain firmly on this ground see the Jewish problem in true proportions, and can tackle it in the same way as any other social problem in an imperfect society needs to be tackled.

THE JEWISH PROBLEM (B)

A different situation arises with those who know something of Jewish history and Judaism, just enough to be impressed with its differentness. Their fears lie along a different line: that the Jews have quite properly a separate interest from the non-Jews, an

interest which may run counter to that of the non-Jews and be a serious danger in war-time ; and that, as the Jews do not profess to accept Christianity, they cannot be expected to profess Christian standards.

These are quite genuine alarms, and demand a serious answer. They are not anti-semitic beliefs, unless those who hold them bolster up their position with the stories already referred to; but it is evident that their fears may well dispose them to accept these stories.

A rather foolish form of this fear is the statement that as " Jewish " ethics are not " Christian," Jews cannot be expected to conform to the Christian society which we hope will emerge after the war. This is foolish because Christian ethics are Jewish, and, so far as community behaviour is concerned, the Rabbis have advanced considerably beyond the Fathers. The real fear is not of " Jewish " ethics, but of the ethics produced in any minority which for generations has felt every man's hand to be against it, and these are ethics which it takes several generations of equality and freedom to reform. But even so it can safely be said that " time is on our side," even though the food prosecutions, and the general association of the Black Market with Jews, reveal that the problem is by no means yet solved. The important point to realise in this matter is that the influence of the Jewish religion, and of the official leadership of the Jewish community, is all the time exerted in favour of a standard of communal ethics which we would be hard put to to equal let alone surpass. This is not a wild utterance, but a plain statement of fact ; and it might be added that in many cases our fears come from our knowing too much of the Jewish history of several thousand years ago and too little of the period from the New Testament to the present.

The fear that legitimate Jewish interests are different from our own needs careful consideration. It is not true of the completely " assimilated " Jews, who form the majority of those Jewish financial interests which the antisemite uses as a bogey. It is not out of that sort of interest that real conflict might arise. But British policy in Europe and in the Near East might well follow lines of which numbers of Jews disapproved; and if this were so, then there would be Jewish condemnation of the policy, and Jewish pressure to secure its abandonment. The situation is akin to that which arises when there is a violent conflict over foreign policy within the community—as over appeasement; but it has the additional sting that non-British Jews would be likely to adopt an anti-British attitude, and to try to influence their governments accordingly. This has actually happened over British policy in Palestine, and also over the attitude of the Conservative Government to the Jewish policy of Nazi Germany. The main danger in such a situation is secrecy, and a general atmosphere of exaggerated alarm. The divergence can be real, and its effects can be embarrassing. But—let us face the fact—what precisely are we to do about it? The only way to get rid of the possibility of the danger arising at all would be to expel all Jews from Britain, and demand their expulsion from countries whose friendship we counted important, and at the same time close down the Jewish experiment in Palestine. In other words it is a danger which can only be completely avoided by Nazi methods, and it is unlikely that many in this country would be prepared to adopt such. Failing that, we can look more closely at the danger. It is certain that the Zionist world violently disapproved of the policy of Malcolm Macdonald; and it is equally disappointed to-day at our refusal to create a Jewish army. But Dr. Weizmann certainly carried the immense majority of Zionists with him when he pledged the full support of Zionists to the British cause at the beginning of the war; and since then Palestinian Jews have volunteered to the fullest extent to which we have accepted their services. In other words, in time of peace and controversy Jewish divergence of interest may cause embarrassment, but in times of danger Jews have enough commonsense to realise the relative importance of different issues. It is therefore right to say that these separate Jewish interests may cause embarrassment in normal political controversies: but there is no evidence that they are a danger when greater issues are involved as in war.

As to secrecy, it is from every point of view desirable that some kind of Institute of Jewish Affairs should come into existence, staffed by objective-minded non-Jews, whose task it would be to keep contact between the Jews and the non-Jewish world both of politics, of broadcasting and of the press. There is little danger in an open disagreement, where each side knows where the other stands, and what it is doing to maintain its point of view. It is the supposed secrecy of Jewish ambitions

which magnifies every Jewish expression of opinion.

THE JEWS IN THE POST-WAR WORLD

The final problem concerns the position of Jews after the war. Here it is important that we base our plans on acceptance of the Jews as they are, and neither as we would like them to be, with all the effects of their abnormal history removed, nor as the anti-semite imagines them. In other words we have to deal with a people divided, nervously affected by the appalling experiences through which they have passed and are passing; with many of the consequences of past persecution still visible in them; with little executive political experience; and with no secure geographical foundation.

It is impossible to say how large the problem will be at the end of the war. No man knows what Jewish casualties as a result of the Nazi occupation of Europe may have risen to be before that domination is destroyed. To say that the figures have passed the million mark already is only speculation, but not wild speculation. The Jewish population still existing in Eastern Europe may be no more than that area can comfortably accommodate. But there may be need to think of homes for anything from half a million to a couple of million of Jews in the general framework of post-war migration. There is one problem. The second problem concerns the status of the Jewish National Home in Palestine. It is no exaggeration to say that the building of the National Home, entirely by voluntary effort and on the background of a persecution unparalleled even in Jewish history, is the single most amazing and constructive event in the world history of the inter-war years. But it is equally true that the relation of the National Home to the Arab world is still totally unsatisfactory, and will need British as well as Jewish thought and action. Finally there is the question of the status of those Jews who remain citizens of many Gentile countries. Hitler has made the whole world Jew-conscious, and there is no Jewish community which has escaped his notice. His malice has penetrated from Buenos Aires to Shanghai, and created a sense of tension in the whole Jewish world. From every side it is reported that anti-Jewish feeling is on the increase. Nazi literature has been translated into every language and disseminated in millions of copies.

These three problems are going to call for earnest consideration in a very short time. Action wisely and carefully undertaken may lay the "Jewish bogey" once and for all. Piecemeal and ill considered activities, the refusal to recognise the actualities of the situation, may leave seed beds in which further trouble may easily be germinated. In such a situation it is evident that Christians as such ought to have considered their responsibilities and be ready to give the lead which is needed. I wish I thought that they had.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, ARLOSH HALL, MANSFIELD ROAD, OXFORD.

Published by Dr. J. H. Oldham for the Council on the Christian Faith and the Common Life and printed by the Kemp Hall Press, Ltd., in the City of Oxford.